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ATLANTIS

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

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of this Book*

ATLANTIS

AMERICA AND THE FUTURE

BY

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PREFACE

THIS little book is based on an article written by me in November last year and published in *The National Review* of January, 1925, under the title of *The Americans*. I have to thank Mr Leo Maxse for his courtesy in permitting me to make use of it.

In 1887, when at school in Lausanne, I met a little American boy who, on every imaginable occasion, pushed Lexington down my throat, and, whenever I retaliated and stood up for my own side, he would answer : " Well, you haven't been to America, you don't know." It took me a long time getting there, but last year I went, and now I do know !

This little boy I thank ; he, if alive, is to-day a middle-aged man, and for the sake of our distant friendship, I

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sincerely hope that, like myself, he is not a millionaire—better be a wild goat on the Acropolis than a tin-can king in Madison Square.

This book needs no introduction, save a visit to America and a close study of the World's history from the earliest ages to present times—also, perhaps, a crystal.

J.F.C.F.

Staff College, Camberley,
August 4, 1925.

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THE SPIRIT OF ULYSSES

"THE man who cannot wonder, who does not habitually wonder (and worship) . . . is but a pair of Spectacles behind which there is no Eye." Thus wrote Thomas Carlyle, and his are true words, for Mystery is to man a veiled and dark-eyed houri, beckoning him onwards, proffering him kisses, drawing him out of what he calls the reality of life, and then eluding his grasp.

Were it not for wonder in man nothing would be accomplished, for wonder is worship, and worship raises

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man from the midden of existence, proclaiming him to be something which nothing else is—a seeker after truth shackled with the bonds of good and evil.

Countless millions of men have wondered, even if only a little, and some over much ; and all the wonder that has been has given us what we have, what we know and feel, and all that we wonder over to-day will give to our children and our children's children the commonplace realities of to-morrow. Thus has the world grown old through the wonderings of man.

Two thousand and six hundred years ago, or thereabouts, Solon, the law-giver, journeyed to Egypt, a land of many mysteries, and there he learnt from whispering priests of a strange island called Atlantis, a powerful kingdom nine thousand years before his day, which long had sunk beneath the waves, far out beyond the Pillars of Hercules.

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Plato gave light to this myth, if myth it be ; yet, once born, it grew to spin, like some tiny spider in the brain of man, its filaments of mystery.

I will now skip many years, two thousand and more, and halt for a brief space at Genoa. There, in 1446, was born a son to a humble wool-comber named Colon, and the boy was called Cristobal, and is known to us all as Christopher Columbus. At the age of fourteen he became a sailor, and, wondering, he believed the world to be round. He journeyed to many lands, and listened to many strange tales : Four hundred leagues west of Cape St. Vincent a curiously carved piece of wood was found floating on the water ; at Flores two dead men were washed up, " very broad-faced and differing in aspect from Christians." Then there were the " formless traditions " of Leif Ericson and Thorfinn Karlsefne, of Markland and Vinland, of the islands of St. Brandan, of Brazil and of Antilla

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or the Seven Cities ; all shrouded descendants of that mysterious Atlantis of Plato's *Timaeus* and his *Critias*. And Columbus was in debt, so he determined to sail out towards the setting sun to discover a road to Cipangu (Japan) and to open up intercourse with the Khan of Cathay.

At eight o'clock in the morning, on Friday the 3rd of August, 1492, three small ships, the *Santa Maria*, 100 tons, the *Pinta*, 50 tons, and the *Nina*, 40 tons, with eighty-eight souls, weighed anchor and stood for the Canary Islands. And, at two in the morning, on Friday, the 12th of October, Rodrigo de Triana, a sailor on board the *Nina*, sighted the outposts of the New World, and Atlantis became a reality.

On Saturday, the 2nd of August, 1924, exactly four hundred and thirty-two years after Columbus had weighed anchor, and in the forty-sixth year of my age, I set sail from Southampton in the *Berengaria*, 52,000 tons ; seven

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hundred and fifty odd saloon passengers, a palm court, a Pompeian swimming pool, a gymnasium, a dozen or so of "movie stars" and a ghetto of Jews. The *Santa Maria* was a decked ship, so was the *Berengaria*, and both floated; such was their only resemblance.

At nine o'clock on the night of Friday, the 8th of August, the skyscrapers of New York emerged like shadows from out the fog, to disappear in the twilight, and then, a little later on, to loom mysteriously out of the darkness with lights burning.

On September the 28th I was back in England, having spent exactly six weeks in the United States and Canada, and having travelled some five thousand miles by land and rather more by sea. And I wondered at the *Nina*, the *Pinta* and the *Santa Maria*, and all the doings of those eighty-eight brave men.

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THE GOLDEN FLEECE

Jason set sail in the *Argus*, Columbus in the *Santa Maria*, I in the *Berengaria*, and though the fame of their occupants differed in inverse proportion to the size of these ships, yet there was something in common between Jason, Columbus and myself. We all stood out to sea for some definite purpose ; Jason to discover the Golden Fleece, Columbus a trade route to Asia, and I the gods of Atlantis, that mysterious country, to-day called the United States of America, which will one day be submerged by legend and myth.

During the Great War and immediately after its dismal conclusion, for the 11th of November was the black day in European history, I met many Americans ; big men, with big purses, but, it struck me somewhat vaguely at the time, of comparatively small brains. In the trenches they possessed

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courage and lacked ability to organize themselves ; in Paris they bought the city and yet seemed to gain no pleasure from their purchase. So remarkable was this (for in Paris, if you know how to spend your money, a little goes such a very long way) that one day, sitting outside a café in the Boulevard des Italiens, watching Doughboy and Doris, the one vertically solemn, and the other somewhat bored, yet as pleased as the normal person is who has backed a winner without seeing the race, I turned to a Frenchman and mentioned my perplexity.

Now the French are a logical nation, yet their logic differs from our own, for it is the logic of imagination rather than of reason ; and it is because of this, I think, that when we argue with a Frenchman, so seldom do we understand each other's points of view. For whilst we think from the head and often slowly, the French think from the heart with amazing swiftness.

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To my observation the Frenchman shrugged his shoulders and replied : " Yes, they buy our wine and our women, and can enjoy neither the one nor the other."

I asked him the reason for this sorry state of affairs.

" Oh ! " he answered, " simply they are Americans."

Logic here seems somewhat obscure, if it be logic at all. Had he asked me this question, I imagine, as an Englishman, I should have pondered some time before supplying an answer, and, after mentally fingering the chain of cause and effect, would have arrived at a long explanation which, when ultimately unwound, would have displayed a similar idea to his own.

At the time I saw this very dimly, if I saw it at all. I had travelled a good deal in Europe and had spent several years in Asia and Africa, and had learnt somewhat of the meanings of nationality and the influence of race.

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In my wanderings I had learnt to appreciate the pantheism of Greece. The old gods still lived on, and though men give them names, it is the gods that give men souls. Odin had breathed life into the Teuton, and Krishna had spun dreams around the Hindu. Where one god reigns supreme, great nations arise ; where there are many gods, then also are there many national outlooks and fusion is difficult.

The gods live on under many names, so common that we no longer recognize their divinity. Such names as geography, climate, corn and coal are familiar to us all, yet they are the names of the gods who rule us, the forces of Nature which make us what we are. In recent years, science has begun to realize this truth, for instance : Darwin, who popularized the struggle for existence and the influence of environment on life and character, did little more than bring Hesiod up to date. The struggle goes on, yet the forces remain

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the same ; names change, yesterday it is Vulcan, to-day coal, and to-morrow oil. Agamemnon and Ajax were great men in their day, and so to-day are Rockefeller and Henry Ford. *Plus ça change plus c'est la même chose* ; but you must travel and remove your national spectacles if you would understand the meaning of these words. Thus it came about that, when, in the summer of 1924, an opportunity offered itself to me to visit America, though my friends suggested the Yellowstone Park, the Grand Cañon, Chicago packing yards, Niagara Falls, and trips up the Woolworth Tower or the Washington Monument, I determined to seek the gods of Atlantis, the gods that are never submerged, and to question them on the future of the great continent over which they rule and will continue to rule until the crack of doom.

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THE ORACLES OF THE GODS

The gods are not persons to be seen or spoken to, their utterances are delivered in oracles, and these are normally cryptic and difficult to understand. There is a Pythoness in every one of us, and a Delphic cavern, namely, our imagination, into which we must retire if we are to accomplish anything of worth.

As the lights of New York glimmered and glittered out of the mist and the twilight, I mounted, in a lift, to the tenth or twelfth deck of the *Berengaria*, and went to the cabin of an American friend, because it was situated close to where the gangway would be placed. To make more room I moved a suit case which was blocking the door. It was of great weight and I exclaimed: "Whatever have you got inside this 'grip'?"

"A dozen of Scotch!" came the

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answer. It was simplicity itself, for all that was necessary in order to pass this load through the Customs was to tie a five or ten dollar bill round the neck of one of the bottles so as to give the Custom House officer the opportunity of untying the knot. If you want to get through the Customs quickly and have, say, two dozen "grips," I recommend the ordinary bow knot as the most expedient.

The wharf we disembarked at was wonderfully arranged. Immense letters, denoting the initials of the passengers' names, were suspended in rows from the roof, and the luggage was shot out of the ship in endless streams, was whisked on to trolleys and deposited under the various letters with amazing rapidity. The whole system seemed efficient beyond belief until, having waited for an hour under the letter F, and having collected two of my four belongings, I strolled round and found one of my "grips" under the letter W, and the

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other under Z. I now realized that, if the traveller wishes to proceed through the Customs with speed, besides bow knots inside his luggage he should have " Whisky " painted in bold letters on the outside, for then, under whatever letter his belongings may be placed, the officials will undoubtedly show a startling alacrity in their collection.

The driver of the first taxi I hailed was tipsy ; the second took me to the Pennsylvania Hotel. On entering this immense building I lost all identity and became the number of my key, and holding it in my hand as I shot upwards, I wondered how many personalities 1492 represented.

In the morning I was up betimes, and as I gazed out of my window on to Seventh Avenue, I saw beneath me a surging mass of humanity, mostly men. They wore no waistcoats and carried no walking sticks, their trousers were kept vertical by narrow belts, and each one of them wore a straw hat.

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The language spoken was English of a kind, yet I no longer felt an Englishman, as I had always felt when I had travelled before. I now felt that I was a European, that I belonged not to a different country but to a different civilization. How strange—I was beginning to understand what the Frenchman meant. Here was I, a Greek in the camp of Darius—the Pythoness within me was beginning to mumble.

I went out and, not to be conspicuous, I bought a straw hat. I took the subway to Wall Street and looked up a friend. Gazing out of his office window on an immense building, I remarked on its size. "Some building, yep!" he answered, and then to impress upon me its vastness, he added solemnly, "I reckon there are six hundred and fifty lavatories in it." Here then was a novel standard of measurement—lavatories, surely this was the Delphic utterance I had been awaiting.

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THE GODS OF ATLANTIS

It is not my purpose in this little book to write a traveller's diary, nothing so banal, for my quest was to discover gods, and to see the shadow of a god it is necessary to mount higher than sky-scrapers, high in the imagination, whence the details of life become obscure, where small things fuse into large, and large things take on some semblance of form. Then, as one watches these forms, can one sometimes spell out the meaning of the thoughts of the gods.

Six hundred and fifty ball-cocks under one roof, this surely is a symbol of vastness and a measurement of the necessities of life. And from this symbol, a magical panticle in its way, I began to realize that the primary factors to note about America are that it is a modern country of immense size, and then, why, I cannot say, but

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that from the mouth of the Mississippi to the mouth of the Mackenzie river the climate varies from tropical to arctic. Geography and Climate, here then are two of the presiding deities of the land.

The greater portion of the United States lies in the temperate zone, its inhabitants are mixed, and, in spite of the fact that they number some 110,000,000 souls, the country is as yet sparsely inhabited ; it possesses immense resources and is securer from foreign aggression than any other of the great countries of the world. The result is that all the energies of her people are turned inwards, and a terrific hustle is the result ; a hustle towards individual rather than towards national aggrandizement, since there is ample room wherein each individual can move.

Whilst in a country such as England, which is densely populated, competition, as a refining process, is the keynote of

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industry ; in the States, competition is replaced by a process of "trampling under" rather than of "working against," and the result is that most things are surging up in temporary and experimental forms. Resources are so great, energy is so unrestricted, that time becomes the governing factor in evolution. Whatever is to be done must be done quickly, so quickly that no one else can do it more quickly. Whilst normally in Europe, a business is afraid of losing its foundations, normally in America, no business has time to dig them in.

This hustle against time is most noticeable in the cities and the townships. Even large sections of New York look more like a construction camp than quarters of a great city, and in the smaller towns, weeds, old bottles, refuse and paper grow and are littered everywhere. Haste replaces thoroughness, people will not wait for prosperity, they must grasp it. Some do so with

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great success, others fail, and all this can be read as one moves about between sky-scrapers and frame huts. There is little or no time for reflection, yet it is reflection which begets forethought, whereby success is foreseen and disaster is forestalled.

In size and potential wealth the United States is immense, so much so that the influence of geography governs all her economic and ethical activities. Historically she is small, almost insignificant, since the Americans have no time to study their own history, which, though a recent, is a very wonderful one.

You cannot "see" Athens in a day, save as a cow sees it, for to "see" Athens you must have studied her history for years. But you can see America in comparatively a few days, especially so if you have travelled in other countries and have learnt to differentiate between space and history, because she has so little history. To see

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rivers and mountains and plains in terms of mileage and acreage takes no time, but to understand their psychological influences on a nation is quite another matter, and America is not yet old enough, or conscious enough, for an observer to perceive these influences clearly—they are still nebulous, like giant shadows cast upon a mist.

Though the people of the States, and the Americans are distinctly a plural race, are drawn from all quarters of Europe, they are unmistakably American, since American civilization is European civilization minus some two thousand years. Yet they belong to a continent rather than to a country, and, in truth, have no distinct nationality, since their political opinions are forced upon them by geography and by climate, the division of the North against the South, rather than by controversy and progress.

Whilst European history dates from

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Athens and Rome, and beyond, and whilst, in modern times, European civilization only changed radically on the introduction of steam power ; America, before the industrial revolution set in, was little more than a land of howling redskins. Her birth as a nation does not date from 1776, but from 1769, the date when James Watt produced his first pumping engine. All the old traditions which preceded this birthday, which are still real powers in Europe, are little outside curiosities in America. Spiritually the country is a corpse, physically a terrific machine. Materialism is the tyrant which rules from ocean to ocean, and its backwash is superstition, and an effervescing froth of cranks.

Here then are the gods of Atlantis, great gods and cunning, tucked away in obscurity, since spectacles are much worn in America, and, as I shall note further on, the land is full of one-eyed men. Yet these gods rule with a rod

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of iron. Immensity says, expand ; Security cries, work ; and Prosperity bellows, struggle. The Past is writ not in the heart but on wood-pulp, and on paper it is bereft of its magic. The Present belches forth " things " like lava from an angry volcano, and its smoke blinds the Future, which unseen, is taking form. And above all these powers squats the Baphomet of the age—Materialism, gross and unrefined, bloated with the wind of strange beliefs.

THE GOLDEN CALF

The size of the country and its immense resources put a premium on materialism ; thus it follows that the American who has conquered the land is in his turn subdued by its wealth. Beauty, proportion, relaxation, especially intellectual, and the many virtues which are ethical measurements

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in Europe mean nothing to the average American, who must have acreage, mileage, tonnage and, above all, dollarage as his standards. Even in business the American appears seldom to think economically; in place he thinks financially, and, because true competition is lacking, money-making becomes gross and unrefined. Everything has a monetary value, even life itself, as the law courts demonstrate daily.

If you ask an American whether a hotel is comfortable, he will answer that it cost a million dollars, or two, or three, or four million dollars, and this *is* comfort to him, and the difficulty is to realize that he means it, for he is not boasting, he is in earnest.

Psychologically this is a strange land—a strange nation which, in spite of its immensity, is still in the throes of being born. To-day America is big with a new civilization, a new god—Moloch or Buddha, but which? Will she continue to sacrifice her children

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in the belly of gold, or will she persuade them to take the middle path between means and end—which ? To-day America might produce a Ghengis Khan, she certainly could not produce an Alexander.

Though the United States, like every other great country, must possess, and does possess, a number of cultured people, this number would appear to be small in comparison to the uncultured masses of her proletariat. In the New England States there are centres of learning ; in the industrial States there is little time to think ; in the South the climate is against the search after knowledge ; and in the West, more especially the Middle West, lies a Serbonian bog of ignorance, as Stygian in its mental density as it is immense in size.

Whilst in Europe culture is to be found in all classes, in the States the truly cultured class must form almost a caste of its own. Amongst the masses

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themselves, differentiation of status appears to be purely a monetary one. In Europe the upper class does not overburden itself with work if it can help it; the middle class normally works with its head and the lower with its hands—each is differentiated, each sets some example, some contrast, to the other, if not always a very enviable one, and intellectually and morally nations grow by contrasts. In the States all classes seem to work frantically and fanatically in the building of the temple of the Golden Calf, and what do we find? That the upper class is the class which has made money; the middle, the class which is making money, and the lower the class which has failed to do so. Differentiation is by arithmetic, not by intelligence or morality. Success and Failure are the gods, success and failure in making money at any price and by all and every means. The green back in the East, the cart wheel in the West, these are the pantics of culture.

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The dollar and the scramble to possess it have thrown the true values of life out of gear. Not only is the dollar a measure of work, but a measure of life which, through this unit of measurement, has become a mechanical wealth-producing force. To the observant European the American is little more than human coal. To obtain the utmost efficiency out of this fuel, work is standardized, in order to obtain a higher output in a given time. Economically, this may be profitable, but not only is the Ford car produced in its millions but also the Ford mind. Henry Ford himself fondly imagines that he has been delivered of a new industrial gospel and, consequently, he believes that he is the prophet of a new dispensation, whilst, in fact, he is only a rather pronounced product of his age. The epoch has produced him and not he the epoch ; he thinks he is raising a great dust, but, like the fly in the fable, his true place is on the axle of his chariot.

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In his "Life and Work" he sees no danger in standardizing work ; to him it is not soul-destroying, since, as he tersely hints : the average worker has no soul to destroy, and further, that the average worker likes to be relieved from the agony of thinking. There is much in his argument ; yet another motor magnate in that dismal city of Detroit said to me, that in his opinion standardization is destroying the worker, and that, because a man likes a thing, this does not necessarily prove it to be beneficial. In the Ford system the worker ceases to be a human instrument, in place he becomes a mechanical tool ; craft disappears, and the man is moulded by the machine.

This transformation of life into a mechanical force, expended in a monotonous routine only rendered tolerable by the prospects of pay day, is producing a nation which, in no European interpretation of the word, can be called democratic. In place, the social out-

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look is what might be called "demo-plutocratic"—Danae is the goddess of the land and Croesus her high priest.

In Europe money frequently induces some culture, for the European, having made his pile, enjoys it. He can afford time for leisure, for having established a business tradition, this tradition becomes his best salesman. The European system may be expressed in the words: "Pro bono publico," its aim, however occult, is the good of the whole, it is democratic, for a true democracy must think, and not only grow rich, and no man can think unless he has leisure. Otherwise with the American, he not only makes his pile but is engrossed by it. The pile grips him, it absorbs him, for it is an octopus, and, if he switches off, the pile, like an electric current, ceases to be. Tradition is nothing to him, since in the States few men venerate the past. In fact, tradition is a danger. The young American will say of an old

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business: "Who are these old fogies, I want a new pair of shoes, and surely the newest store will supply the best article."

THE STABLE OF AUGIAS

The Golden Calf demands some kind of a stall, or in other words this mechanical and material outlook manifests tangibly in the low ethical tone of the nation. A people who can always find a laugh in a swindle, and a hearty laugh when the swindle is particularly shady, is not, from the European point of view, an admirable nation.

The explanation, I believe, is a simple one. The outlook of the people is so material, and life is so geometric, that those who have any soul left in them find almost an ecstasy in crime, for it draws them out of the sordidness of their material system, even if only to lead them into the sordidness of spirituality. To-day, crime in America is

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what black magic was in the Middle Ages—an intellectual recreation, a relief from the crystalline dullness of existence.

Many of the innumerable newspapers live on crime, and as the masses have no time to laugh when at work (for a man who presses a button a hundred and twenty times a minute is nothing but a human make-and-brake machine), laughter, which in the end is intellectual and not material, must be catered for. Hence such headlines as: "Sight-seeing plane flops; Youngstown flyer killed," or "Robbers sit on victim as they eat his lunch. Night watchman held up by three who use him as chair during feast." The "hard-eyed man from New York" writes of the boy murderers Loeb and Leopold: "No frantic men harbouring real or fancied grudges, no men avenging womanhood or violated honor, these two debonair youths redolent of gin and hair oil. . . .'
To supply headlines to the newspapers

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is the making of a man. In this noted murder trial, which in itself was an orgy of immorality, Mr Robert E. Crowe, the State's Attorney, must have been a gold mine to the papers—perhaps he has shares in them? “Prattle and piffle of paid alienists. . . .” “Twaddle about childish compacts and youthful phantasies, and dreamlands of teddy bears and detective careers”; at length he compared the “boy slayers” to “rattlesnakes and mad dogs.” This orgy of headlines concluded, Judge Caverly, who, incidentally, in the middle of the trial was accused by some Texas judge of suborning witnesses (!) announced a five minutes' recess to enable the women to leave the court. “I want you to leave at once;” he said, “why persist in hearing this rot?” Somewhat similarly, in the recent Dayton “Monkey Trial,” Judge Raulston, a Fundamentalist, ejected the jury from the court whenever Evolution came under discussion!

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I was in Chicago during part of the "Boy Slayers" trial, and, on one occasion an American said to me : " We excel you (the English) in many things, but as regards law and justice, we are five hundred years behind you." Personally, I think that his estimate of time is a conservative one.

There is probably more crime in Chicago than in the whole of the British Empire. In 1923 I was told that one hundred and forty three self-confessed murderers surrendered themselves to the police, and three were hung. This drastic vindication of justice had apparently something to do with the decimal system, in order to facilitate the addition of entries in the police ledgers.

Murder, however, is but small fry in Chicago. To understand what crime really means, the seeker must enter the underworld. I had the good fortune to see part of it, and was conducted round by a judge ! The iniquity

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is that this underworld, which in sordid bestiality would demand a Dante to depict it, is under police supervision, it provides in fact gilt-edge stock. A Canadian once said to me, "Chicago is hell! If a good-looking girl wants to go there, my warning is, 'never talk to a policeman, not even to find your way, or you will certainly lose it.'"

In Chicago, and for aught that throughout the United States, money can buy not only witnesses but policemen and judge. A democratic country prides itself on its law and order; a citizen of the United States is quite safe to take the law into his own hands as long as he has a thick wad of yellow backs in his pocket.

In spite of all this bribery and corruption, we are apt to misjudge the Americans, unless we understand the conditions which produce this state of affairs. First there is the eternal hustle and jostle of many peoples, most

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from European countries where law and order are conspicuous through their absence ; and secondly, we have the innumerable crank laws passed by the various States. If an American were honest, in the British meaning of the word, he would spend the best part of his life in the police courts, for no man could possibly be acquainted with all these laws, nor, even if he were, could he observe them. Consequently, to save time he pays the policeman in place of the magistrate. In all probability it costs him less, he certainly saves time, and it really does not concern him who gets the fine. It is a simple and practical system, and one created and forced upon him by circumstances. The real harm begins when the dollar bill is replaced by political wire-pulling. I quote a case from *The New York Times*. The headline reads : " Man beats a Girl Unconscious in a Taxi." The ruffian said to the policemen who arrested him :

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"My 'old man' is the big political boss of the neighbourhood . . . and I'll see to it that everyone of you get the gate. It's an outrage when a man cannot attend to his private affairs without interference from the police." If his 'old man' were the potentate he proclaimed him to be, I have not the slightest doubt that the girl got locked up and the police got the "gate," otherwise the Statue of Liberty would hold up both her hands.

A sure measure of the ethical values of a people is to be discovered in their national sports and recreations. In every form of game the Americans excel, yet, on the whole, their sporting spirit is of a low order, and in many cases non-existent. In a game the American is very naturally out to win, but, like a Latin player, he is out to win at any price; the means he employs do not matter. Unlike a Latin, he adds science to cunning. For example, take a game of football: the opposing

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players take lessons in ju-jitsu in order to "out" their adversaries! On the field the best players are marked down for rapid dislocation of knee or shoulder—if not worse. If a player succeeds in fouling "within the rules of the game" he becomes a hero in the public eye. Take baseball—and I saw Pittsburgh play New York—the audience plays with the players by abusing the side they are not backing. The umpire is howled down, or abuse of a vulgar order is hurled at the pitcher to put him off his throw. This is all very un-British, but it seems to suit the Americans.

The craze for what in the States is called "efficiency" is destroying true sport, which is well on the way towards mechanicalization. In England, the *raison d'être* of a game is to obtain relaxation from work, and the winning of it is only a finality which makes the game possible. The American turns this simple principle upside down.

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He is out to win and, as for relaxation, he replaces it by labour, for it is his business to win. Not only do all means justify the end, but the natural process is to standardize athletics like the Ford car. The all-round athlete, so famous amongst the classical Greeks, is replaced by the one-event man, who spends his youth in developing certain steel-like muscles and a narrow skill.

THE ATLANTIDES

The lack of what we in England call sportsmanship is reflected in the manners of the men. Whilst socially true sport draws man to man, standardized business drives humanity apart—each man has his particular button, and he goes on pressing it till he dies.

Before going to America I was told that the Americans were great talkers, in place I found them morose, their

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conversations lacked sparkle and wit.¹ They seemed too self-conscious to let themselves "go," always excepting the Jews. They seemed obsessed with the idea of "the hard-eyed man" or "the square-jawed man" or of some form of masculine omnipotence. In fact, many of them play at being men, just as little boys so often do.

One day in a railway freight yard, in which some fifteen hundred men were employed, I asked the doctor in charge of the first aid room if he had to attend to many casualties. He at once assumed a "square-jaw" attitude and replied: "Two thousand a month, and anything from a small piece of hide off to the amputation of both legs!" The way he said this would alone have brought him in five guineas a night on any London stage, yet he

¹ *The Living Age*, Boston, for one dollar, will supply for three months sufficient matter to enable its subscribers to "Converse wittily, Listen intelligently and Laugh judiciously." Unfortunately I never met any of them.

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had not the faintest idea of how funny he was, for all the time he was making his jaw square.

The bulk of the men are curiously un-English in appearance, nor do they bear any resemblance whatever to the cartoons of Uncle Sam. Their heads are rounder than ours and their faces fuller. They are as tall as we are, if not taller, but they "slip their chests" at an earlier age. The men are very bourgeois, and the long-faced man, so typical of the upper class in England, is seldom seen.

The American gentleman, and by gentleman I mean a man of breeding and culture, is a most attractive character, perhaps partly due to his rarity. Generally he comes of old British stock and is proud of his ancestry. He is courtly and generous, hospitable and well-mannered. Unfortunately this class is dwindling, as is generally the Anglo-Saxon stock. The exorbitant price of houses and the dearth of

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servants, has much to do with this, for no man, who respects his wife or values comfort, can indulge in the luxury of a family in an apartment flat of two rooms or in a hotel.

If the Anglo-Saxon stock is dwindling, the Latin stock is increasing, and the Hebrew stock is rivalling the sand on the sea shore. New York, sometimes called Jew York, is crawling with Israelites. At Coney Island I literally saw square miles of naked Jews, all stumpy, all of a type, all quite impossible. The Negro problem may be a serious one, but surely the Jewish problem is far more so? In less than a generation New York will be a New Jerusalem, of this there can be no doubt.

The American women stand apart from their men-folk. Many of the girls are extremely pretty and nearly all are well dressed. The most remarkable difference is, however, in their manners. For example, take the girl stenographer

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class—they are courteous and nice-mannered, and have always a smile for the enquirer, even in Youngstown (the most poisonous city in America), and however hot may be the day. Their brothers are gross, ill-mannered and in their straw hats and trouser belts more than less offensive to the eye. For instance, take the street car conductor. In one of the numerous pamphlets used to “merchandise transport” and to be found in every conveyance, I read: “Human, real, a living, breathing representation of the handiwork of God—that is the Street Car Conductor.” In Detroit, I asked one of these archangels whether his car went past 34th Street—no answer; I repeated the question—no answer; again I repeated it—no answer, and yet again, then he looked at me and roared on the top of his voice: “Yep!” To test whether I had or had not struck a “bad egg,” on three other occasions I asked whether the car I

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was in passed 34th Street, knowing that it did not. On each occasion the procedure was identical. I had to put the question three or four times, and then the "living representative of God" yelled "No!" in so stentorian a voice that the contact rod all but jumped the wire.

Later on I came across a confidential pamphlet which was issued to these "breathing representatives of the divinity." In it I read amongst other things:—

"To eat and operate a car at the same time requires extreme caution."

"It is not good form to push any woman off your car. Don't do it."

"When a lady smiles as she gets on your car, that is no sign that she is seeking steady company."

All this is most true, and some of these notices are very instructive. Such as one I saw in the office of a steel magnate in Milwaukee. It read: "Get to the point, but don't camp on it."

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Indeed, from the narrow British point of view, if America is to be saved, it is her women who will save her, for they can hold their own with any of their foreign sisters—they are quite wonderful !

A virtue nearly all Americans of the better class possess is hospitality, and especially towards strangers. The American's first greeting is invariably : " Glad to know you," and whether he is glad or not, he, at least, seems so, and goes out of his way to do all he can for you.

An Englishman who, for over fifteen years, has been managing large businesses in New York and Chicago, volunteered to me the following opinion on the Americans. He said :

" The average American is temperamental and insincere, the sentimentality he so frequently displays is but skin-deep, for below it lies a good fat layer of brutality." In his opinion, the Englishman possesses more backbone, and is

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more reliable, but he will not take the risks the American will ; he may possess more moral courage, but he is less of a gambler. The Englishman is nothing like so hard a worker as the American, and he is decidedly more hostile to criticism, for tradition is bred in his bone, and by nature he is insular and conservative. The American has few traditions ; consequently he is more susceptible to criticism and to change ; in fact, he does nothing but change, hence he is more moody than we are.

Further, he told me : “ The English are creators and inventors, the Americans are not, but they are wonderful improvers and adapters. For brain power, America relies on Europe, but the American is gifted by nature to seize on an invention and turn it into a commercial success. His education is careful but not practical ; he is not taught to think, he, consequently, does not know how to express himself. He wanders on for twenty minutes when

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a couple should suffice. To solidify his ideas he makes use of 'hieroglyphics of speech,' such as 'hot dog' or 'slap-up man' which convey, in a word or two, the meaning he cannot express in common English."

THE CYCLOPES

Geography has fashioned the English into an insular race. The smallness of our country, its dense population, and its comparative ease of communications have, in the last half century, turned England into a city—a city of immense suburbs. We all think more or less the same, and we think nationally.

In the United States, geography has influenced the people very differently, for, being sparsely inhabited, the country, socially and politically, is much in the same condition we were in in the days of the Heptarchy. Each State is a modified kingdom and Washington is

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Winchester. The greater number of the States are so big and their population is so small, that, as in the case of Ancient Greece, each city is in the eyes of its citizens a very big affair. The result is that the Americans are, at present, the most parochial of the great nations and, like the Cyclopes, they possess immense bulk and but one eye.

The village pump means more to the average American than Washington or New York, unless the pump is situated in these cities. The parish of New York has little in common with the parish of Philadelphia. In New York you can hide yourself at once ; in Philadelphia it is difficult to remain unseen. The Philadelphian is curious, the New-Yorker is self-centred. Washington is the seat of government, but it is not a capital city in the European sense ; the States has no true capital, and is unlikely to have one for another century, for every city or township is *the* capital to its inhabitants.

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It has been rightly said by some American, concerning the cities of his land, that "the only point from which to see a city as it is is another city." Go to Detroit and you will think that all Americans are rude ; go to Washington and you will think them all polite ; go to Philadelphia and you will think them all lazy, and go to New York and you will feel that they can never stand still. In Chicago you will discover that bobbies and bandits are synonymous terms ; in . . . unfortunately I have not travelled far enough to find any opposite parallel to Chicago.

If you say to an American who hails from Kalamazoo, that New York is the finest city in the world, he will say : " Well, have you seen Kalamazoo ? " If you say that South Africa has the finest climate in the world, he will answer : " I guess you are wrong, have you ever been to Snohomish ? " He may never have been to New York, or he may imagine that South Africa

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is girt by the Yellow Sea. This makes no difference, for he firmly believes that Kalamazoo or Snohomish is *it*, and so also with every three shacks and a dunghill.

Yet there is a common sentiment between the Cyclopes, they all know that they live in "God's own Country"; the veracity of which statement depends entirely upon which god you worship.

THE TOWER OF BABEL

In spite of the lack of history and tradition, this parochial outlook breeds a local conservatism. In spite of his material progressiveness, the American is psychologically a backward animal. In order mentally to keep up with his surroundings, especially international ones, the American relies on exaggeration, for the superlative mood is apt to disarm criticism.

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The country is so big and so full of possibilities that there is plenty of room for mountains as well as for molehills. The daily press, which after all tries to express daily thoughts, not necessarily daily actions, panders full-heartedly to this failing ; and among the innumerable newspapers I have read, the only exception I have discovered is *The Christian Science Monitor*. This paper stands on a solitary pinnacle of veracity, apparently the only truthful eminence in the American newspaper world.

Not only on Sundays does every self-respecting journal publish an edition which demands a strong man to carry it—a symbol of the immensity of America, but throughout the week no single item of news is left naked as it was born. Every incident is dressed up in crinolines and bustles, until it is as unrecognizable as was beauty in the seventies and eighties. For example, here is the description of a fox hunt, taken from *The New York Times*.

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“ The canine dam broke at 6 a.m. . . The hound flood burst towards East Norwich. . . The dog torrent boiled into the Willocks. . . Fading green fields were suddenly snowed in and freckled over as the big acreage of white hounds with brown patches hurried onwards. . . ”

What a hunt, seen I should imagine from the top of a skyscraper somewhere in the clouds. No British paper could do as well as this, not because British papers are scrupulously veracious, but because their readers possess a higher general knowledge ; they are, in spite of their insularity, far more men of the world than the average American. They are not so keen on playing poker, but I think this is due to the fact that they are more gifted in seeing through a bluff—they prefer cricket, in more than one sense.

Exaggeration is a stepping stone to untruthfulness. I was once dining with some friends in Pittsburgh when a

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reporter burst into the room. He wanted to know what I was doing in the States. I could not well tell him I was questing American gods (what would have happened had I done so ?), instead, I said that I had come to study cross-country tractors, caterpillar vehicles and such like, and mentioned to him the exploits of M. Haardt and others in the Sahara, the sands of which I have never seen. What was my confusion when the next morning I opened *The Gazette Times* to find the boldest of bold headlines which read as follows : " Conqueror of Sahara Visits Pittsburg to Study Transportation."

This was not the worst case. On another occasion, as I was about to catch a train, the hall porter in the club I was staying at announced a lady. I met her standing by my taxi. " Oh ! " she exclaimed, as she opened her notebook, " tell me all about the next war ? " I leapt into the taxi and fled. Nevertheless, a day or two later a friend

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informed me that he had, in some paper, the name of which I forget, read a whole column on Armageddon, which must have been the result of this "interview," as I was its alleged originator.

This craze for sensation and exaggeration to relieve the monotony of dull material existence is apt to throw the mind out of balance. If you will insist on exaggerating everything, in turn, everything is represented to you as an exaggeration, and it takes so long to undress truth, and the Americans have so little time to undress anything, even themselves (consequently the men dispense with waistcoats and the girls bob their hair), that the American cuts the Gordian knot in place of unravelling it. He accepts very few truths, even in business, for truth is so uncertain in the form he receives it that he just sets it aside and starts from the beginning. His process is neither a rational nor an irrational one, it is un-rational.

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It is the process of Nature—of the material unconscious world—it is the process of trial and error. Naturally the result is astonishingly wasteful. Waste of coal, waste of oil, waste of natural gas, waste of everything.

This exaggerated waste demands exaggerated wages, and there can be no doubt that the average American worker is far better off than his brothers in Europe. The ability to pay high wages is based on the artificial foundations of protection, which may suit well a country which possesses all it requires in abundance, and which, for a generation or more, will remain under-populated. Yet it fosters waste as well as comfort, and prosperity is a bad school wherein to cultivate a quick intelligence.

The workman frequently owns his house—generally of the neat bungalow type ; always his Ford, the worker's horse, and more often than not a phonograph and a radio.

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The average workman is so well off that he refuses to do dirty jobs—Italians and others can do these if they like. He is so well off that he has little inclination to improve his lot. "Why become a highly skilled engine fitter at double my pay when my pay provides me with everything I want?" He has to work nine or ten hours a day, and does so; he has little time left for leisure, save of the radio-phonographic-rocking-chair sort. To him money is losing its European value: it gives him all he wants, and he has not the time for it to entice him to want more. He is fully occupied, and on the whole well contented—but . . .

THE DETHRONEMENT OF BACCHUS

Behind the worker, the people and the nation, stands the crank—the recoil of all this materialism. It was a crank that gave us the League of Nations—

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poor long-suffering Europe. Similar cranks have stopped cigarette smoking in certain States, and have banned "The Origin of Species" in others, and it was a handful of cranks who fathered prohibition.

The masses of the people wanted to read, smoke and drink in peace, and they still want to do so, but they were and are inarticulate. How can you be articulate if you think that Kalamazoo is the centre of the universe? Bands of howling cranks take parish after parish; even New York with its seven million inhabitants—mostly Jews—might well be stormed by a dozen determined fanatics.

Alcohol is a spirit, to the gods nectar and soma, a sweet poison, and a magician which can cast a spell over a man, rich or poor, and which can raise him, if only for a brief hour or two, to the seventh heaven, and then drop him with a crash to earth so that he wakes up with a sorry headache.

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This spiritual power, and I do not mean this as a pun, was too much for the materialism of America. The cranks could not see that even in the grossness of drunkenness there was some dim and far distant glamour of a great virtue—the vision of that which can never be a commodity: they stopped drink, but they did not attempt to keep this vision bright.

Have you ever taken a pretty girl out to supper, and, when she has fluffed herself down before you and is gazing at you over the roses, have you ever had the audacity to turn to the waiter, who has just presented you with the wine card, and say: "A Bromo Seltzer"—never in Europe!

To drink well is to drink ceremonially. Everything must be arranged around the bottle—the girl, the roses, the silver, the glass. Then the cork is removed and the jinn hops out, and as he antics about the table, you begin to live, you forget your dollars and your

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ball-cocks and your Kalamazoos. The world turns from gray to rose, a blush suffuses everything you look upon. Would a jug of iced water do this? I really do not know, for I have never tried it!

I must waft aside this most pleasant of visions, for it is somewhat out of place in America. A band of howling cranks, of the grossest materiality, carried prohibition through the States, and, in my opinion, the States got exactly what it wanted. The saloons were a standing disgrace, as the law courts still are. The people frequented them not so much to get *a* drink, but to stand and receive drinks as soldiers did fire in the bad old days. Good fellowship was measured by the number of "highballs" a man could pay for or swallow. The average worker did not want to turn himself into a mobile or, frequently, immobile, vat. He wanted a drink, not a dozen drinks; but convention prevented him fulfilling his

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wants ; consequently his home suffered, consequently his work suffered, consequently the nation suffered.

There can be little doubt that lack of intelligence and prohibition have largely assisted in producing a pseudo-paradisaical state. It is not because he has learnt to share all things in common that the American worker is happy, but because he has become a capitalist as regards wealth and a communist as regards intellect. Concerning wealth statistics may help us a little. There are 24,000,000 families in the U.S.A. ; 13,000,000 possess motor cars ; 9,000,000 phonographs and 3,000,000 radio sets. In 1920, \$2,000,000 were spent on radios, and, in 1924, \$350,000,000. The moral seems to be that, if people cannot drink, they sing or listen to song. It is anyhow a good sign, as music is not a commodity.

The radio will in some small way nationalize the Americans, and it will, I think, mitigate the parochial influence

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of the newspapers. Though newspapers can be telephoned across the continent, just as the Manchester edition of the *Daily Mail* is telephoned from London, in America it would not pay, for America is not such a city as England is. The farm hand in some out-of-the-way shack in Texas or New Mexico can switch in and hear Davis or Coolidge orating; he can learn that "Star Strippers"¹ are busy in Los Angeles. Here we have the ingredients of nationality, as of generalship, namely, just knowing what is going on on the other side of the hill. "When Miss Sophie Senkevitch, a Russian girl, danced a Spanish dance at a bull fight here (Newark) she was arrested for 'inflicting mental anguish' on the bulls" . . . or: "Court room no Boudoir insists Woman Judge. Accused

¹ A "Star Stripper" is a jewel thief who specializes on movie celebrities. One can almost see the lady in her shift—but I do not suppose that in Los Angeles this is exceptional.

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Actress removed to Detention Pen for Powdering Nose." Surely such news is more refreshing than an unbroken rumination on glanders, your corn, or on potato beetles.

But to return to Bacchus and his tub.

To-day you can get a drink anywhere if you search for it, and, if you know your way about, you do not have to do much searching. To-day you can still see more drunken people in the State of New York than in the whole of the British Isles, but the majority belong to that sect which is born to get drunk, any member of which, even if he were marooned on the North Pole, would discover how to brew alcohol out of ice and shoe laces. But the masses of the people do not belong to this sect. At present, many Americans would enjoy a glass of beer; but home brewing takes up much time; besides the breaking of the law in the States offers no stimulus of excitement, seeing

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that, if you are caught, a dollar or two will square the constable.

The masses of the people have been made rich through prohibition. What they once spent in the saloons they now spend on their homes, and, in a generation, those who are now children will have lost the taste for alcohol. Many Americans realize this, and they realize not only the moral value of prohibition, but its economic value—at least in part.

The part they have not yet realized is a point I have already referred to, namely, the intellectual mediocrity of the American working classes. Before the days of prohibition, there was an incentive for the worker to improve his position, if only to obtain more drink. To-day, having replaced perishable alcohol by material things—phonographs, Ford cars, etc., this incentive has lost its power, hence the more highly skilled workers and the casual labourers are drawn from Europe. To

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confuse this problem, a curious complexity has been introduced into the American labour world. The prohibition of alcohol has given the worker wealth, and the immigration restriction laws are limiting the inflow of European labour into the country. If the native-born American is sufficiently rich and contented to lose his taste for highly skilled work and for casual labour, and Europeans, who are fitted and desirous of undertaking this work, are kept out of the country, something must crack, either wages, or industry, or law.

THE VATS OF CIRCE

What is going to crack is the "almightiness" of the dollar, for out of the crank is stalking the black magician.

When a man believes in nothing, or, rather, does not trouble himself spiritually about anything in particular, his mind is even more open to superstition

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than if he be a fervent totem worshipper. So unbelieving is the average American that not only has he no religion, but practically no politics. The Presidential and other Elections may stir up his hatred, but they do not awaken a righteous wrath. Democrats and Republicans are as near alike as Tweedledum and Tweedledee, and are only distinguishable through their mutual dislikes. The result is that any fanatical minority can make an immense noise, because of the mental stillness of its surroundings—the noise is, of course, only comparatively a loud one, for actually it is but the noise of the proverbial pin.

The cry of the sorceress is heard in the land, for to-day America is full of magic. I felt this as I sailed into New York harbour, when I saw the lights of the skyscrapers glimmered through the fog. There is wizardry in the land, and to enter Chicago, at midnight, from the north, is to partake of a spiritual Black

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Mass. As the river is crossed one steps into an enchanted city. A tower stands on the right hand and another on the left. Then an immense building, glowing white under the rays of a fan light, juts up into the night like the face of some gigantic iceberg, and opposite to it rises a towering mass of blackness, yet unfinished, gloomy and without a light, brooding high above one, its summit mingling with the stars. Verily Chicago, at midnight, is full of primeval magic, and the great buildings I passed seemed to me to be Jakin and Boaz threatening and yet guiding those who would enter the city during the hours of darkness.

As the sun rises the vision fades, for as yet it is of the night, and the traveller is left facing Jews, Modernists, Fundamentalists and Whatnots.

The "isms" and "ists" in the United States are legion, like the devils in the story of the Gadarene swine. Here is a scene which is purely

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medieval, a recent gathering of "World-Enders" awaiting the crack of doom: "Robert Reidt, with his wife and a dozen followers, took to the hill-top near Patchogue, Long Island, preceded and followed by a derisive, yelling mob. . . . It was a fine night," we are told, "for aerial observation, but no chariot appeared in the sky. . . . Reidt, the leader of the 'faithful' . . . was found shouting up to the skies through a rude megaphone, 'Gabriel, we're ready! Oh, Gabriel!'" Could anything be more material than this? Yes! "Reidt was late in leaving his house for the 'last day' because he was fascinated by jazzy music sent from Pittsburg over the radio. One of the attendant reports reminded him that midnight had arrived, whereupon Reidt went out and was photographed with blinding flashes by a great battery of Press photographers." At length, realizing that the last day had not arrived, he remarked: "Nothing

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doing," and went home. A dozen suicides resulted, one man shooting his wife and himself as *he* "could not stand the strain of watching till midnight!" Others—possibly Jews—sold their property, apparently so that they could take the proceeds with them to heaven.

Here is another and more up-to-date sect, run by one, H. F. Dunn. For the megaphone is substituted the radio. In a paper issued by the "Dunn Radio Research Laboratory," Indianapolis, we read: "Now what are the PLANS of GOD? They are to build up a Civilization that can produce and protect Minds capable of building ELECTRICAL RELAY APPARATUS to relay HIS WAVES in this part of the universe." . . . "God's forces want us to make relay apparatus to relay His power," and Mr. Dunn can supply it! There can be no doubt as to its efficiency, for Mr. Dunn has already tuned in on the Hell-Lines, and has picked up the following messages: "Skidoo" . . .

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"Handing you the raspberry" . . .
"Hell a popping" . . . "Dead from
the neck up" . . . "Cuckoo" . . .
"Boob" . . . "Gob," etc., etc.

Wonderful! And I have no doubt
that it pays!

The reader may object that I have
taken extreme cases; but I have not.
I have dozens of cuttings from American
newspapers, and they are all much the
same. They show a mind, a soul, en-
cased in a fleshly prison, seeking for
something the dollar cannot buy.

The "Monkey Trial" in Dayton,
Tennessee, shows this quite clearly, and
Fundamentalism is a growing force.
The question was: Should Darwin's
theory of evolution be taught in the
schools? The Modernist said "Yes,"
and a Modernist is not a Medievalist,
and as the Fundamentalist is one, he
said, "No."

The question of Fundamentalism is
to-day a vital one in America, and it
crops up at every turn. Thus, during

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the Loeb Leopold trial last year, Dr. John Roach Stanton delivered a sermon at the Calvary Baptist Church, in which he said : " These young men are simply Modernists who have let their Modernism go to the full and logical limit of utter unbelief in God and heartlessness toward man. They are simply believers in the brute struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest."—fittest is good !

Then came the " Monkey Trial "—a ten days' orgy. There was nothing new in it : the Fundamentalists represented the South and West, and the Modernists the North, and the god of Climate smiled.

" Photographers, cartoonists and cinematograph operators " vied with " religious enthusiasts, sellers of soft drinks, monkey mascots and bibles and books on evolution." Mr. W. J. Bryan, ex-Secretary of State, " threatened if necessary to get the Bible written into the United States Constitution." In the midst of a raging thunder-storm he

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" climbed the high mountain overlooking the lovely valley of the Tennessee river. Speaking at the summit, amid flashes of lightning, Mr. Bryan expressed the hope that a great religious revival, partly as the result of Mr. Scopes's trial, was about to sweep the country with Southerners as its leading crusaders."

Surely there is not much difference between Mr. Bryan and Robert Reidt ; both are on hill-tops awaiting a new world. Fundamentalism is to become part and parcel of the Constitution, just as prohibition became, and, strange to say, in this land of liberty, where negroes are enfranchised but not allowed to vote unless their grandfathers voted, it is possible. Circe has replaced Bacchus, that is all.

THE VOICE OF DELPHI

But it is a very big " All," an all-embracing " All," big with the possi-

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bilities of the future, this bubbling cauldron of Circe. What will rise forth from it, for its contents offend the eye, the eye freed from the spectacles of convention. Is there hope in the future, or must America drift along its Cyclopean way until some new Ulysses extinguishes its sight and plunges the land into utter darkness.

There is a great hope, of this I feel certain, for the inner worth of the Oracles must be read, if their outer expression is to be understood.

In America we see crime, selfishness, lawlessness and a gross all-embracing materialism ; yet, if we watch closely, we shall see at least the shadows of the mighty things which once perplexed Europe, more especially Europe of long ago. We shall see the insularity of little nations, lack of true patriotism and nationality, the conceit and power of kings, tyrants and oligarchies ; the wealth of medieval Venice and the vice of medieval Rome. We shall see

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sorcerers and sorceresses, alchemists, crusaders and monks; heretics innumerable, ignorance, pedantry and scholasticism, and the endless turmoil of strange nations moving from the east towards the setting sun.

To-day the Anglo-Saxon population of America is being steadily submerged by the broken men of Europe, true descendants of the barbarians who followed Attila, Theodoric and Alaric. And all these strange people bring with them strange gods, the ever-latent memories of a Europe now shrouded in steam and smoke. Gods from the icy halls of the North, from the sensuous lands of the South, and the gloomy forests and plains of the East. Teutonic gods, Latin gods, Tartar gods, and all are cast tumultuously into the cauldron of Circe to bubble and to froth.

Yet two gods they bring with them which stand apart from all these forgotten gods, gods which even their worshippers do not know, for they live

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in their bones. And these two gods are Youth and Discontent, and they hold in their hands a child god—the Wonder which is to be.

The vision passes, let us descend from this mountain top.

With this glimmer of Truth, a greater truth than the fleshly eye can discern in the outward turmoil of America, it is nevertheless dangerous to dogmatize on social, economic or political conditions, for in the United States these are in a constant flux, and are subjected to persistent exaggeration. The country is so vast that everything is contorted by geography, and appears in such exaggerated forms as to render perspective obscure. Again, as nothing is stable, all things are changing; it might almost be said that at present nothing permanent is being created, and that even American industry is still in an experimental stage, true production not having yet begun.

For example, take the skyscraper; it

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is, I think, a good standard of measurement, since the character of a nation so frequently finds expression in its architecture (*e.g.*, Egypt, Greece and Europe of the Middle Ages). The skyscraper is first a European warehouse elongated—an exaggerated copy, the Procrustean bed which drew it out being the geography of the land. Next this hideous block, this immense packing case with holes in it, is fashioned into a tower, and now the tower is being shaped into a ziggurat. To stand by the Woolworth Building is like standing by a tent pole ; it is so slim and naked that one feels it lacks a covering. An American once stood by it and explained its wonders to a young English officer ; and after having run through its acreage, mileage, tonnage and dollarage, he wound up by saying : “ And it is fire-proof and *absolutely* indestructible.” Then he paused and waited for the effect. The Englishman looked up and laconically murmured, “ What a pity ! ”

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Both the American and the Englishman were wrong. The one was astonished by mere dimensions ; the other was over-flippant. Yet of the two the Englishman was nearer being right.

Chicago at day is not Chicago at night, and if at noon you look at the city from Lake Michigan, it resembles a goods yard. There you see packing-cases large and small, tall and long, and they are all, or nearly all, square.

If you are a European, and you stand by the Woolworth Tower, you say : " What an immense building ! " But, if you are a good American, you would see something more. You would see, not the end, but the crude beginnings of an architectural epoch ; you would see in its steel and stone a struggling intelligence, the mind of a nation yet uncertain, but of a nation which has some gigantic idea in its head, an idea it cannot as yet express. You would be struck, not by the majesty, but by the smallness of the building. It would

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appear to you but the pinnacle of, or an abutment to, a building which is to be—a cubic mile of masonry with replicas of the Acropolis, the Forum and the Champs Elysées on its roof—something like this. Then you would deduce from this dream picture a fact, namely that there is nothing too gigantic for the Americans ; that America has scarcely begun to grow, and that everything that is useful to man is going to grow in this land of immense plains, immense rivers and immense mountains, and is going to grow in immensity. Even the redskin, poor wretch that he was, when he inhabited this land, was immensely cruel.

To understand existing conditions in America you must read Gulliver's Travels. To-day the country is Lilliput struggling to become Brobdingnag, to-morrow it may be Laputa—a flying island raised above earth by a loadstone and peoples with philosophers and their flapper attendants.

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When you do understand this, the present upheavals—crime, corruption, lawlessness, trade booms and depressions, political squabbles, prohibition and the yearly output of Ford cars, appear ephemeral and insignificant items, which, though they may, at the moment, influence the nation, socially, politically and financially, cannot seriously influence the future. The strength of America does not solely depend on the power of Wall Street, though many Americans are obsessed with this idea ; but on the will of the nation itself, the will to grow and go on growing ; and as long as the resources of the country hold out, and as long as the country remains under-populated, this will, the will of Youth, is not a free agent—it must expand, it will expand, for it cannot do otherwise.

Let us now mount higher than the Woolworth Tower, into the turquoise of the heavens above ; thus we shall approach nearer to the gods, those in-

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visible powers which hold the sealed scroll of fate.

The horrid bubbling of the cauldron and the writhings of its unnamable offal do not herald in the reign of a Sardanapalus or of a Nero. Then the fire was burning out, but, to-day, in America, it has only been kindled. Let it burn on, and consume Circe and all her sorcery.

Youth is the reincarnation of Hercules, Youth which will change not the course of the river Alpheus and sweep the Augean stables free of dung, but a mightier river than ever flowed through Elis, the river of sane and sober American opinion—a river of purifying fire. The Atlantides will vanish and become true Americans, the Cyclopes will grow another eye. Of old these uncivilized monsters and man-eaters were born of Earth. Craftsmen of Vulcan, gross and material, Apollo slew them one and all, and so will the Americans slay the Cyclopes within

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them when they learn to bend the bow of truth and release the arrows of justice.

Material immensity is, after all, but the sigil of a god, and not the god himself. Out of Reidts and Bryans and their likes may the Atlantides find deliverance, as wonderful as that of Science which bubbled out of the cauldrons of medieval sorcery.

The gods reign, rule and direct. Yesterday they were Yahweh, Zeus and Brahman, to-day they are called Force, Nature or Law ; and good and evil are but the measurements of our obedience or disobedience to their will. They are obscure gods, but omnipotent, omniscient and eternal. Our destiny is in their hands ; all things lie on their lap—the past, the present and the future.

ON THE LAP OF THE GODS

No man can with any certainty say what the future has in store ; even the

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excavation of the bones of the past is a difficult work, and also the present is vague and elusive. For, whilst the body of man is compounded of dust and water, his intelligence is a fusion of good and evil, of truth and error, of joy and sorrow, of the eternal opposites which jostle onwards, entangling his very thoughts. Yet, at least, he can remove the spectacles of convention, and wonder as he gazes on the sigils of life.

There is a great book called History, the encyclopedia of the gods, written by divinities with living pens—those frail quills called men and women. We can spell out the letters, but the ideas underlying them are cryptic and frequently undecipherable. This book is written in many tongues, some dead, others unintelligible. It is a palimpsest of cross writings and innumerable blots ; fact is overlaid with fiction, and truth is smudged by error, for the pen is human.

To predict even vaguely of the future

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of America, we must open this great book, and read the past history of Europe.

I have written of the Middle Ages, and have shown, whether correctly I cannot say, how the modern Hun, Goth and Tartar has carried within his bones strange gods into the new lands over the Atlantic; gods which to-day in Europe are slumbering in gloom and panoplied with dust. These distant years are vague and shapeless, let us ascend therefore to more recent times: the near present, the outline of which is clear, at least we think so.

In Europe, the Great War was a military earthquake, a great international struggle between wills; in America it was looked upon as a financial episode, and, in fact, it was but little more than this, for to-day as a heroic epic it is being forgotten.

The Great War showed Europe to be where Greece was in the days of Thucydides. Her tribes and cities had

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a common civilization, a more than common religion, but divergent political views. The Peloponnessian war was an unsatisfactory turmoil which left the Greek cities and tribes utterly exhausted. So also was the Great War of 1914-18, a most unsatisfactory and exhausting struggle, it concluded nothing save that it closed an epoch, but few see this.

North of Greece lay Macedonia, east of Europe lies Russia, at heart a non-European power. Out of Macedonia came Alexander, and out of Russia is emanating a new "gospel" called Bolshevism. To the Athenians and Corinthians of the fourth century B.C., the men of Macedon were uncouth barbarians, So to-day are the Russians to us. Yet Alexander thrust spears into the hands of his people and led the shepherds of the Thracian hills to the Indus and the Jaxartes. A stupendous man, heroic beyond heroism, a divine volcanic flame wrapped in a little

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mortal clay. A dreamer, who saw in a fusion of races a world empire.

He was no communist save in the completeness of his autocracy. Yet, where do his ideals differ from those of the Bolshevik oligarchs? They are the same, though seen from a different angle ; for both are based on internationalism.

This is what the great war gave us—internationalism. Nationalism had seemingly proved itself absurd ; therefore Europe and America turned a somersault, and to quote a former work of mine :

“ The economic communist says : Huge money capitals are an evil and are the result of competition. If every man possesses a million pounds the world is no better off than if every man possessed one penny. Lenin then says : But why should he possess a penny ; if you agree to a penny, why not to two-pence, a shilling and eventually back to the million? I shall, therefore,

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destroy all capital, so that, as no one will be allowed to possess capital, all forced competition will disappear.

“ The ethical communist says : Huge mental capitals are an evil and are the result of competing minds. If every man possesses high ability the world is no better off than if every man possessed a low ability. What does President Wilson say ? He says, somewhat vaguely, that every nation has a right of self-determination, or, in other words, that a highly cultured nation is of no greater value to humanity than one without any culture at all ; *ergo*, culture, or mental and moral capital, should be abolished.”¹

Darwin contradicts both, because he understood Hesiod, and every Fundamentalist in Atlantis quivers with rage, which only shows that primitive Christianity is near akin to atheistical Communism. Both possess an equal fervour, in the one God is worshipped

¹ *The Reformation of War*, p. 269.

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and in the other it is No-God, nevertheless it is the fervour which burns.

Ghengis Khan, Subutai and Tamerlain came out of Tartary ; so may an Alexander come out of Russia. How he will fight, what he will do, no man can say ; but if he be possessed by the ideals of his spiritual ancestor, even if he succeed in grinding Europe under the heel of his Cossacks, as Greece was ground under the heel of the Macedonian and Thracian shepherds, if history is not too smeared over to be read aright, he will fail, and why ? Because of the will of the eternal gods of Climate and Geography, for these gods love diversity of race.

Alexander was the herald of Rome, but Rome produced no exalted hero like Alexander, for even Scipio and Caesar were in comparison but little men. But what Rome did produce was a heroic race.

To-day I believe that the germs of such a race lie embedded in the material-

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ism of America. To-day Japan may be Carthage, but I cannot imagine Japan begetting a Hannibal. If she only could, then this New Rome might save Europe, before the orgy of the Red Cult slimes over her. No! Whilst Europe is in the melting-pot, and here the vision becomes obscure, perchance America will find herself in the blast furnace of civil war. All men love shedding blood, and if a country is not threatened from outside, then it must suffer from indigestion, that is internal revolution, and to me this seems all but a certainty, for a nation which is fed on gold must grow sick unto death.

Nations, like the human beings they are composed of, have their childhood, and, like a child, America is to-day satisfied with material things; and as children pass through adolescence and grow into men and women, so a time comes when every nation must step over the threshold of religion and discover a spirituality which is above

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all toys—as love is to the boy and the girl.

Soon, it would appear, though it may be a long time yet, that the United States will be plunged into a religious war. Protestant will attack Catholic, and out of the ashes of this hideous conflict will arise the form of religion best suited to the spiritual needs of the nation. Some think that it will be the Methodist Episcopal Church, “because this is unique already and is only to be found in the United States.” I cannot say ; but what I feel is that the inner form of the struggle will be North against South, and that religious wars are wars of growth, and that martyrs more so than saints are required before a religion enters into the bones of a nation, and reveals that it has a soul. Without this revelation the people of the United States must remain the most criminal nation on earth.

An American, writing to me of his own people, has said that “to-day the

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Americans . . . are utterly godless, because the religions of their forefathers have no meaning for them, because present-day Americans are a different *type* to their ancestors." This is very true, and to realize it we must not mistake the low animist superstitions and material idolatry, which haunt the so-called religious sects of America, as being true expressions of religious emotion and worship. To a truly religious person it matters not whether he is descended from Adam or an ape, for God fashioned both out of the dust and both are thus compounded of heaven and earth and are in the eyes of their Maker very good. The still small voice and not the megaphone is the means of contact with the Sublime.

You cannot borrow or steal another nation's religion, for religion is not a commodity to be bought or sold. "Once," says this same writer, "let the Americans feel a disaster of some kind that cannot be remedied by

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money, and you will see a magic change come over them. At first they will be stunned, because their childish minds cannot at present conceive of anything bad that money cannot cure ; then they will investigate and through trouble will find their soul."

In these last words I feel the breath of the gods upon my neck. Let the dollar be found void, and the horrid vacuum may be filled by a New Rome.

The future conglobes into a crystal sphere. Those who are blinded by spectacles see but their own reflections as in a mirror, but those who use their eyes see, within, eternal movement towards some better end, in itself but another beginning.

This is what I see and with the eyes of the Pythoness :—

Within that amorphous palpitating mass we call the United States I see the beginnings of a new civilization, and, behind this mass, I hear the retreating footsteps of the old. Surely

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the reign of Greece and Rome is drawing to an end, and surely this mechanical monster, which faces us in the West, will, in another four or five generations, grow into something terrible or sublime. Another volume of the history of civilization will be opened, a volume as different from the book we now read as our period is from that of our stone-chipping ancestors. What will America be like when her population equals that of China? I think the answer must be—The gods alone know. Yet one thing is certain—Atlantis will have sunk beneath the waters of Lethe and have become a riddle and a myth.

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